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SANIBEL WILDLIFE REFUGE ENLARGED BY 637-ACRE WITHDRAWAL

Addition of 637<sup>✓</sup> acres of public lands to the Sanibel National Wildlife Refuge in Florida was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton. A public land order reserves the area for use by the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service for enlargement of the refuge.

The Secretary said the refuge is used by migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, herons and roseate spoonbills. It was established in 1945 on Sanibel Island in the Gulf of Mexico, three miles off the Florida coast near Fort Myers.

The refuge presently embraces 2,532 acres, most of it leased from the State and private owners. Addition of the 637 acres will bring the refuge area to 3,169 acres.

Otters and alligators also are present at Sanibel Refuge. Sea turtles deposit their eggs on the Gulf beaches in this section, during spring and summer months. More than 400 varieties of seashells have been collected at Sanibel. There is excellent sport fishing for snook from piers, bridges and beaches. Red fish and trout are caught from boats off shore, and good tarpon fishing is experienced during the spring and summer.

The land being added to Sanibel Refuge is swamp-like and is subject to periodic overflow. It is not suitable for homesites or small tract development, but is regarded as ideal for waterfowl habitat.

The withdrawal order was requested by the Fish and Wildlife Service, with concurrence by the Bureau of Land Management.

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